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ABSTRACT

This practicum was designed to bridge the gap between strong values held by a Lutheran school and output from learners in the school that reflected these values. Using the "I Can Make a Difference" model, students in grades five through eight worked during weekly enrichment periods for 12 weeks to select and solve real life problems. The setting was a Lutheran elementary school (preschool through grade eight) in the southeastern United States. Some students worked in groups while others worked as entire classes. The culmination of the enrichment experience was a care fair that displayed the results of the learner projects. Data analysis showed that the anticipated number of projects was exceeded and a learner self-check indicated that learner attitude toward these projects was positive. Parent involvement did not achieve the anticipated level. Learner output reflected the values of the school and made special efforts to improve conditions in the school and community. Appended are: learner self-check forms; enrichment program mentor response; care fair evaluation form; and the enrichment log form. Contains 12 references. (EH)

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ED 387 411

Elementary Students Translating Values Into Action Using an Enrichment Model for Lutheran Schools

by

Daniel P. Czaplewski

Cluster 49

A Practicum I Report Presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova Southeastern University

1994

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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Fort Lauderdale, Florida

June 27, 1994

Date

This practicum report was submitted by Daniel P. Czaplewski under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

29 July 1994

Date of Final Approval of Report

Roberta Wong Bouverat

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ABSTRACT

Elementary Students Translating Values Into Action Using an Enrichment Model for Lutheran Schools. Czaplewski, Daniel P., 1994: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Lutheran Schools/ Elementary Education/Values Education/ Prosocial Behavior/Altruism/ Enrichment Activities/Enrichment Triad Model

This practicum was designed to bridge the gap between strong values held by a Lutheran school and output from learners in the school that reflected these values. Learners were facilitated to identify, investigate, solve, and report their results on real life problems of their choosing. Learners used creative and lateral thinking skills in the process.

Fifth through eighth grades students used a 40 minute enrichment period for 12 weeks to select and solve real life problems. Some students worked in groups while others worked as entire classes. The culmination of the enrichment experience was a care fair that displayed the results of learner projects. The writer acted as the enrichment facilitator in the development of these projects. The enrichment facilitator gathered information, made needed phone calls, and provided the format for reporting results.

Analysis of the data showed that the anticipated number of projects was exceeded, and a learner self-check indicated that learner attitude toward these projects was positive. Learner output reflected the values of the school and made specific efforts to improve conditions in the school and community consistent with the values of the school. Parent involvement did not achieve the anticipated level for a number of reasons.

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Daniel P. Czaplewski (signature)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of the Community

This practicum was implemented in a Lutheran school located in a middle class community with a population of 1,250,000 to 1,500,000. The community was in the southeastern United States and had business, industry, and residential elements. The residential areas included both single and multifamily dwellings with an average home cost of $83,208.00.

There were public and non-public elementary and middle schools within the borders of this community. The public schools were part of a much larger district. The non-public schools were both religious and secular in nature. Three other Lutheran schools were within five miles of the school where this practicum was implemented. The other Lutheran schools served different populations than this school.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The Work Setting

The writer's work setting was a Lutheran elementary school with 260 students in preschool through grade eight. The middle school division was grades six to eight and the classes were departmentalized. Grade five was included in departmentalized teaching for art, computer, current events, and music on Fridays.

A diverse group of people had a stake in the elementary school. A broad spectrum of values, religious affiliations, ages, and family situations were represented by the stakeholders of the school. The stakeholders were made up of the parents and children, members of the operating church, administration and teachers.

The families were generally middle class to lower middle class with a mix of ethnic origins. The predominant ethnic group was Caucasian which comprised about half of the student body. All families paid a tuition of $2,300 per year, though about 10% receive need-based tuition assistance.

Some families were drawn to the school because of a commitment to the same values as the school. They may or may not have shared the same religious affiliation as the sponsoring church, but parents wanted a Christian school environment for their children.

Other families enrolled their children in this school because they wanted an education that was superior in quality to the local public schools. These families had an interest not only in academics, but also in the caring and personal atmosphere that the school offered. These families were not opposed to the values of the school, though they did not have a personal commitment to them.

Most families elected to send their children to this school for a combination of the above reasons. Some parents clearly stated their agendas and others kept them concealed. Nine of ten school families did not hold membership in the sponsoring church and many professed no active religious affiliation.

The school and church had a single corporate identity, though the school had a separate budget. The congregation and school constituencies were similar in socioeconomic status. The school was more ethnically diverse than the church and the families of the church were, on average, older than the school families.

The faculty and staff were personally dedicated to the values of the school and supportive of new ideas for improvement. The faculty was experienced with an average of 12.3 years in teaching.

The Writer's Role

The writer was the sixth grade homeroom teacher; taught departmentalized science and physical eduction for the middle school; and instructed the computer classes for grades five to eight. To implement this practicum, the author needed the cooperation and assistance of both peers and superiors. The writer needed leadership skills that cultivate the participation of other professionals without the authority to coerce their involvement.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The strong prosocial philosophy of the school did not translate into opportunities for learners to solve problems with compelling social value in areas of individual interest. The essence of the problem was making a connection between prosocial values of the school and learner production. The purpose of the school was based on a specific world view. There was not, however, an intentional effort for learners to display this world view in tangible products.

Learners in grades five to eight at a Lutheran school were capable of making a positive impact on the world. Children in the school had the skills to create problem solving projects that improved the lives of others. Age appropriate activities did not bridge the gap between learner activities and the basic beliefs espoused by the school with the depth of conviction that these values demanded.

The mission and purpose of the school were drawn from its religious beliefs. In a Lutheran Christian school there was the conviction that meaning in life can only be found in service to God and others. Inherent in this world view was the need for a faith life evident in relationships with others. Beyond the daily relationships with peers and adults, learners were not enabled to make a positive impact on the world congruently with the mission of the school.

Problem Documentation

The problem of school values not translating into student output was seen in several ways. The strong commitment to Christianity was present in the school's philosophy and public relations materials. This commitment to Christian altruism had not been significantly translated into enrichment activities by groups of students, classes, or the school as a whole. The meager number of schoolwide and class projects over the last two years and a sampling of discipline referrals over an eight week period indicated a gap between values and corporate behavior.

Commitment to Christian Values

Christian values were evident in the public relations material that the school used to recruit students. The name of the school identified the core values of the school very clearly with Christianity. These values explicitly demanded behavior that benefits others.

The school's dedication was further seen in the academic policies of the school. Beginning in the first grade, students received at least 150 minutes of instruction in religion each week in addition to a weekly 30 minute chapel service. Students were required to participate in these activities.

The policy of the school stated that only those teachers and teacher aides who had a Christian faith and membership in a church would be hired. Regardless of credentials, teachers were not be contracted unless they were committed to the Christian faith. Of the nine full time teachers, seven received degrees from Christian colleges operated by the national church body with which

the school was affiliated.

Group Projects Demonstrating the School's Philosophy

In the two years between October 1991 and October 1993, there were four schoolwide efforts to put the values of the school into practice. Four projects were undertaken over the 80 weeks in two school years, a rate of 0.05 projects per week.

Two of the four projects were food drives. One drive was held each Christmas or Thanksgiving. Collected food was distributed to agencies that serve those in need in the community. One class undertook a month long project to write personal get well cards to members of the school and church who were ill and another class maintained a prayer ministry for other children in the school for three months.

There were no service projects that recycled anything other than aluminum cans which were used to raise money for the school. There were also no efforts to conserve energy or water in place at the school.

The minimal service projects and environmental concern was inconsistent with the strong emphasis that the school placed on its religious beliefs. The school did not demonstrate congruence between values and practice in this area.

Discipline Referrals

The school used a system of demerits for dealing with inappropriate student behavior. These referrals resulted in a 30 minute detention after school and, after six demerits, a student may be expelled at the discretion of the school

board.

Demerits were reserved for serious or habitual inappropriate behavior. Behaviors such as cheating on a test, acts of disrespect for a teacher, or a pattern of missing assignments often resulted in a demerit. During an eight week period in the fall of 1993, 11 demerits were issued to fifth through eighth grade students for anti-social behaviors such as fighting with or striking peers. Though this was only a little more than one demerit a week for 104 students, it demonstrated that the connection between the values of the school and personal behavior were not always made..

Causative Analysis

The easiest explanation for the gap between the stated values of the school and the lack of learner output demonstrating the school's world view was to suggest a weak commitment to the philosophy of the school. This was a real possibility. Because of the limited time to generate learner output and a lack of knowledge regarding a viable vehicle for such output, however, it was impossible to ascertain the level of commitment. The role of leadership from administration, faculty, and parents also needed to be considered in evaluating the climate for learners to develop and implement solutions to real life problems.

Administration

Administration had the power base to create opportunities for learner enrichment in a manner consistent with the values of the school. The current principal assumed the post in July 1990 and found the school in a financial crisis

that peaked at $80,000.00 of indebtedness. The debt was with an annual budget at the time of $300,000.00. When this practicum was implemented, the outstanding bills amount to less than $35,000.00. Debt reduction consumed most of the energies of administration. In 1993 there was the additional burden for the principal to teach full time in a classroom due to a midyear vacancy.

Classroom Teachers

Classroom teachers in the school had responsibilities that limited time to explore options for projects outside the core curriculum. In most small elementary schools there is not a support staff or many scheduled breaks during the school day. A classroom teacher is responsible for his or her class almost the entire six and a half hour school day. Additional responsibilities included biweekly faculty meetings, Parent Teacher League events, church commitments, parent conferences, coaching, and preparation time.

Time constraints limited opportunities to investigate or design programs for learners to solve real life problems. Further, since 1990, there was not a single workshop on academic enrichment at any of the annual Lutheran teacher conferences which the faculty attends. Little time was available for independent study of enrichment techniques and there was not a formal opportunity for becoming informed in this area.

Individual classroom teachers also lacked the power base to create a comprehensive enrichment program for the entire school. Even if there were the time and the knowledge, teachers needed the cooperation of administration for a

school wide program to be viable.

Parents

Most parents lacked the skills and time to assist learners adequately in developing solutions to real life problems. Also, individual parents could only be expected to assist their own children on a project. An individual learner would, therefore, be unable to collaborate with peers and parents on a major project.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

The literature did not address inconsistency between values and learner output on solving real life problems, nor did it consider the specific problems of a Lutheran school with this issue. There was sufficient documentation of many related topics. Related subjects included the limitations placed on learners' thinking in current educational practice, the Schoolwide Enrichment Model, the role of thinking skills in problem solving, and creative problem solving.

Limitations on Learners' Thinking

Limitations on thinking were related to the problem because limited thinking was a possible cause of the gap between values and learner output. Parnes (1981) and de Bono (1982) described the processes that limit the kind of creative thinking skills needed for learner projects. Renzulli (1977) was critical of the current practice in American schools and offers an alternative approach broadening learners' thinking.

Parnes (1981) believed that the human mind was capable of producing new ideas and solutions at "kaleidoscopic speed" (p. 61). This natural creativity was

limited by two factors. Conditioning restricted new ideas because individuals became afraid that they will have a negative consequence, and there was a tendency to follow routine ways of thinking and solving problems.

Parnes (1981) offered a step by step model for encouraging divergent thinking and creative problem solving. He proceeded with the basic premise that the human mind was creative by nature, and the limiting forces on this instinctive inventiveness can be overcome.

de Bono (1982) was also critical of how thinking processes are conditioned, though he took another route for how thinking can be improved. de Bono began with the axiom that thinking was a skill which can be sharpened or dulled with training. He went to great lengths to distinguish between thinking and academic success which he calls "cleverness" (p. v). de Bono (1984) further pointed out that thinking skills were not simply critical thinking, but involved a more divergent process.

de Bono (1982) used the phrase "intelligence trap" to describe the difference between academic success and effective thinking. The intelligence trap was a result of a highly intelligent person's ability to defend any position, even a wrong one, coupled with a close relationship between intelligence and the need to have the right, or orthodox, answer. The intelligence trap could enslave individuals and groups to outmoded paradigms. (pp. 4 - 6)

Renzulli (1977) was highly critical of the gifted and talented programs used in many schools. He argued that not only are the approaches to gifted students a

patchwork of methodologies, but the technologies employed to teach gifted and talented learners could and should be used for more learners. Reis and Renzulli (1982) used the results of a study involving 1,162 elementary (grades 1 to 6) students to support the belief that the concept of gifted was too narrow and excluded many capable students from these programs.

Renzulli (1977) offered the triad model for enrichment. Renzulli and Reis (1985) expanded the enrichment triad in the Schoolwide Enrichment Model.

Schoolwide Enrichment Model

Renzulli and Reis (1985) offered a ready to use model for schoolwide enrichment. Fundamental to this model was the enrichment triad. The triad model was built on three types of learning activities. Type I activities were general inquiries into areas of learner interest; these were most often done in the context of the regular classroom with individuals or groups. Type II activities raised the level of thinking and feeling to a higher plane as they deepened the investigation of interests on the part of learners. Type III activities provided learners the opportunity to explore and offer solutions for real problems stemming from the regular curriculum or from the environment. (p. 110)

Thinking Skills

de Bono (1982) proposed "lateral thinking" as an alternative to the intelligence trap. Lateral thinking differed from creativity and problem solving; it was "the ability to look at things in different ways" (p. 58). de Bono offered the CoRT Thinking Program (from Cognitive Research Trust) as a way to train

people in lateral thinking. de Bono's (1991) Six Thinking Hats program applied these processes to children in grades Kindergarten to five.

Creative Problems Solving

Parnes (1981) offered insights and a specific method for improving creative powers in solving problems. Creativity was often seen as an activity that was needed in society, but not very practical. Parnes balanced creativity with practicality in problem solving model.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The challenge to put values into practice is present at every stage in life. Because a Lutheran school derives its reason for existence from its values, the importance of translating philosophy into experiences for learners is essential. The goal of this practicum was to have learners produce tangible evidence of the values of the school in a way that makes life better in the world.

Expected Outcomes

The following goals and outcomes were projected for this practicum. The values of the school will interact with the real world on several fronts. Learners in grades five through eight, working as individuals and groups, will identify, investigate, and attempt to solve real life problems in a way that reflects the values of the school. Solutions will then be reported and evaluated by the learners themselves and others. As learners work to help others through problem solving projects, they will apply the values of the school to peer interactions and the number of discipline referrals for antisocial behavior will be reduced. Finally, the enrichment process will channel the interest and support of parents in constructive ways. The process will equip parents to serve as mentors and

coaches for learners attempting to solve real life problems. The tangible results of these outcomes will be displayed at a care fair.

Challenges for All Learners

Learners will be academically challenged by the development and reporting of solutions to real life problems. Challenges for learners will be in the context of either whole classes, small groups of three to seven, or as individuals.

The outcome of academic challenge means learners will identify real life problems, investigate the problems, and implement solutions. The problem identification process will focus on areas that put the altruistic values of the school into practice. The entire process will be facilitated by adults and learners will regard the process positively while taking pride in the accomplishments.

Parent Involvement in Enrichment

Parents will serve as mentors in as many projects as possible. The enrichment facilitator will provide instructions for parents in this process at the onset of implementation.

Parents will be invited to coach and mentor their children. Care will be given to help parents avoid making the projects parent, rather than learner, output. The attitude of parents following the care fair will be monitored using a survey (see Appendix B). For the enrichment program to be a success, most parents must regard the process positively.

Social Significance of Enrichment

All learners will be aided by parent mentors to positively impact the school

and its community. The products of academic challenges must demonstrate the values of the school and represent a significant numerical increase over the past two years in such efforts.

Projects will have social significance and will include, without being limited to, endeavors to promote ecological responsibility. Recycling, conservation of resources, and environmental concern projects may be some of the directions that these could take. In addition, socially significant projects will likely improve the life of others less fortunate than the learners.

Measurement of Outcomes

The primary instrument for measuring these outcomes will be a care fair conducted at the end of implementation. The care fair will recognize all participants and each project will be assessed by one outside and one faculty evaluator (see Appendix C). Projects will not be ranked, however, to emphasize the collaborative rather than the competitive aspects of learning. The written critiques will be on an age-appropriate form and be narrative rather than quantitative.

The care fair will take the format of a science or learning fair. Projects will be displayed on story boards that inform those who attend the fair what learners cared about and what they did about their problem. The displays will indicate the students' intent and their actions.

Outcomes for All Learners

A minimum of five group or individual projects will be displayed at the

care fair. Projects will demonstrate the academic challenge as each class in grades five to eight will sponsor and sustain for at least three weeks an improvement project they will choose.

Learners will regard themselves as positive change agents in the world empowered to effect worthwhile change. This perception as positive change agents will be demonstrated in the slogans or mottos that each class develops and adopts. Class mottos will be collected and displayed on a bulletin board for the entire student body to see. To demonstrate positive self regard, learners will develop news releases to local and denominational media. Other publicity efforts may be generated by members of the class to display accomplishments.

Learner pride in accomplishments will be measured by self-evaluations (see Appendix A) which will be a part of the care fair experience. Self-evaluations will use items where students grade aspects of the projects and items that are open-ended. At least half of the participants in the care fair will rate the experience positively; a positive rating was a grade average of B or above on the items that receive a grade.

During the last four weeks of implementation, the rate of discipline demerits given for inappropriate peer interaction will be reduced from an average of 1.4 referrals per week to 0.75 referrals per week. The total number of demerits from the current year will be compared with the previous year as adjusted for the difference in enrollment.

Outcomes for Parent Involvement

Parent involvement as mentors will be documented for two of every five projects at the care fair. A total of at least 10 families will participate at some level in the process. Instructions for mentors and expectations will be provided to each parent who will then sign a mentor agreement as a prerequisite of his or her participation in the process.

During the care fair either all or a random sample of parents who participated will be surveyed (see Appendix B) regarding attitudes about the process. The questions will be open-ended to be answered in a short essay form. At least two of every five parents who respond to the survey will have a majority of positive comments about the process.

Outcomes for Socially Significant Projects

Over the 12 weeks of implementation, at least three enrichment projects will benefit the school or larger community so the values of the school will be displayed and promoted in the community. Output will be at the rate of 0.25 projects per week. This rate was five times the rate of similar projects over the last two years.

Projects of social significance will translate the values of the school into action that learners, parents, and the community will see. Internal school newsletters will feature reports of the projects on at least four occasions. Community or denominational publications will feature at least two socially significant projects.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

The strong philosophy of the school provided the raw material for learners to make a positive impact on the world. The problem was to synthesize the philosophy of the school with intentional and structured efforts to guide learners in using gifts and talents to make the world a better place. Learner challenges took place in the context of academic enrichment in grades five through eight. Learners identified real life problems and implemented solutions that reflected the values of the school.

Relationship of the Literature to Possible Solutions

The literature offered several interesting ingredients for a solution without providing a single model for translating values into practice. The Schoolwide Enrichment Model, thinking skills, creative thinking, and the value of parent mentors provided pieces for a solution.

Schoolwide enrichment model

Olenchak and Renzulli (1989) gave a positive review to the Schoolwide Enrichment Model after studying its implementation in 11 elementary schools. Of particular note in this evaluation was the improvement in student, parent, and teacher attitudes toward enrichment and gifted programs and an increase in student creative products through the Schoolwide Enrichment Model.

A helpful insight that Renzulli and Reis (1985) provided was the "three-ring conception of giftedness" (p. 23). This definition of giftedness considered the research that showed productivity to be independent of a single set of traits. The three rings of above average ability, commitment to a task, and creativity overlapped to empower outstanding achievement. It should be noted that "above average ability" refers to both general and specific abilities in the top 15 to 20 percent (p. 23).

The Schoolwide Enrichment Model and three-ring concept of giftedness had some promise for encouraging creative learner output. The Schoolwide Enrichment Model did not, however, address the role of values in the process of enrichment.

Thinking skills

de Bono's ideas and techniques (de Bono 1991) had the potential to improve learner output and facilitate problem solving projects. The six thinking hats approach provided learners with tools for problem solving. The lateral thinking that de Bono promoted enabled learners to see the potential for positive impact on the world.

The broad minded approach that de Bono took may have seemed dangerous to some who regard a commitment to values, particularly religious ones, as biased and narrow. Lateral thinking was independent of values and was a possible tool in solving this problem and not the solution.

Creative thinking

The application of Parnes' ideas about creativity to this problem implied a need to provide learners with an environment that was accepting of their ideas. According to Parnes (1981), learners naturally have the needed creativity to develop innovative solutions to real life problems. The task of enrichment was to remove the obstacles to these processes.

Creative problem solving was applied to the problems studied here, though creativity was separate from values. Unlimited creativity also ran the risk of taking the problem solver away from his or her core values. What checked this possibility was that evaluation was a part of the creative process for Parnes, and the value structure, or philosophy, was the key to evaluation.

Parents as mentors

Roberts (1992) defined a mentor as a combination of "the roles of teacher, counselor, and coach" when working with a single or small number of learners (p. 36). McCollim (1992), O'Connell (1992), and Roberts (1992) all discussed the potential benefits for learners and families when parents take on the role of mentor.

The opportunity for parents to become involved in the education of their children as mentors had many applications. What made it a worthwhile concept in this context was that many parents in the school actively support at least a part of the school's philosophy. Parent support was to be channeled to help translate the values of the school into problem solving projects.

Summary

Though none of the literature adequately addressed the unique needs of a Lutheran school to convey its values continually, there were some useful insights and techniques available. The help parents could give as mentors was not overlooked in the development of an enrichment model.

The uniqueness of a Lutheran school was seen in the prominence of its values. The literature did not specifically address the philosophy of Lutheran schools as it viewed ways in which learners can solve real life problems. The marriage of the educational technologies in the literature with the strong philosophy of the school had the potential for advancing both the skills of learners in the school and internalization of the values of the school. The potential benefit to learners, the community, and the school was significant.

An Indigenous Solution

An indigenous solution to the problem was one that accounted for the specific values and mission of a Lutheran school along with the unique opportunities available at this school. The literature offered some tools to use in a solution, but the solution had to be "home grown".

A solution in this setting involved a change of thinking. Traditional educational practice, particularly religious education, encourages the learner to be passive and reactive. What the above literature suggested was active involvement by learners in their education. Active, rather than passive, learner involvement leads to more effective learning. With the deep commitment to its values, the

school chose needed effective techniques to translate values into practice.

Description and Justification for Solution Selected

The most desirable solution was the initiation of an enrichment model for students of the school in grades five through eight. This enrichment model was titled, "I Can Make a Difference". It was a non-graded opportunity for learners to explore real life problems of individual interest and social significance with the aid of classroom teachers, the enrichment facilitator, and parents.

I Can Make a Difference

The author served as facilitator for the "I Can Make a Difference" program, coordinating the identification of problems, facilitating problem investigation and solution, and organizing the reporting and evaluation of problem solving projects. All learners in the school were able to participate in this enrichment, but the level of participation depended on the individual learner's interest.

Learners were encouraged to direct the course of enrichment projects. There was also the freedom to work as individuals, in small groups of four to seven, or as an entire class. The classroom teacher and the enrichment facilitator were to work together to find the age appropriate configuration for each class and project.

Enrichment period

A weekly enrichment period of 40 minutes was the primary vehicle for the "I Can Make a Difference" program. Recess and lunch breaks could also have

been used to facilitate learner involvement in the program. The preparation for these classes was the responsibility of the enrichment facilitator.

During the enrichment period, learners identified real life problems in need of solving. The process of identification involved a "double funnel" process of divergent thinking, or brainstorming, followed by convergent thinking for evaluation. de Bono's (1991) thinking hats model was helpful in framing these ideas for learners in a concrete fashion. Modified elements of Parnes' (1981) techniques were also used in the identification phase. The enrichment teacher facilitated the identification portion of the process in one enrichment period.

After learners identified problems, individuals, small groups, or entire grades selected a single problem to investigate. The enrichment facilitator provided the resources and techniques for students to use in their investigations. At times it was also necessary for the enrichment facilitator to break down the task of investigation into component parts for groups to complete.

The investigation phase ended with learners formulating a plan for a solution to the problem. The plan was a road map for learners to follow in the next phase.

Implementing the solution

The solution that learners planned for the problems involved action in some way. Learners became the doers, motivators, publicists, and champions of their causes. Learners had a positive impact on peers, parents, the school, and the community as they worked to make the world a better place.

As learners implemented plans of action, they were given the opportunity to adjust the course and respond to unanticipated events. The enrichment facilitator and classroom teachers were to encourage learners to see solutions as a part of a value system and an extension of the school's philosophy.

Reporting the solution

During and after the implementation of the solution, learners reported on the success of their projects. The effectiveness of the learner solution to the problem influenced how they communicated the results. Learners were to summarize the results in one or more of the following formats: update reports in classroom or school newsletter, a report at the care fair, a log of the implementation process, a picture or story in a local or denominational publication, and a verbal report to other students or adults.

Part of the reporting process was self-evaluation and reflection. Forms and a log served this purpose. A format for care fair projects made reporting uniform for all individuals or groups that participated.

The role of classroom teachers

Classroom teachers were to participate in the enrichment program in a support role, though some teachers might have, voluntarily, shown more leadership. The enrichment facilitator kept teachers informed about the projects involving students. If a class chose to implement a solution, the teacher was to be more supportive of the entire process and be able to integrate the project into the class routine. In all cases, the classroom teachers were to combine elements of

the enrichment program to extend curricula.

Teachers were also given the resources to use de Bono's lateral thinking program in each classroom. Individual teachers could have used this program in their own classrooms, because it had the potential for enhancing problem solving skills in several academic areas in addition to the enrichment program.

To offer support to the program, teachers were told about the entire process at a faculty workshop. They had the opportunity to ask questions and offer input on the enrichment effort.

The role of parent mentors

All parents were informed about the enrichment program, the accomplishments during implementation, and were given the opportunity to serve as mentors. Those parents who accepted the invitation to be mentors were instructed in the process and cautioned to avoid the pitfalls of parental over-involvement.

Parents needed feedback for mentoring to be a meaningful experience. Learners provided a natural feedback, but it was too haphazard to assure a positive opportunity for parents. A systematic mechanism for communicating to parents the results of mentoring efforts was found in the existing system for reporting the progress of a solution. Learners were always to be included the activities of parent mentors in reports for the care fair.

Justification for this Solution

The solution was justified by its ability to achieve the goals and objectives

outlined in Chapter III. This solution did so in a way that used the available resource of parental interest and did not significantly burden financial assets. It also did not add significantly to the work load of classroom teachers.

The chief goal that the "I Can Make a Difference" program was to be the vehicle for learners to put the values of the school into action. The products of the enrichment program promised to improve conditions at the school or in the community in a manner consistent with the philosophy of the school. The process of problem identification, investigation, and implementation of a solution also academically challenged all learners.

The parent mentor opportunity gave parents a chance to extend the values of the school into families. The process of preparing parent mentors gave them the knowledge to enhance each child's learning in new ways. Parents who might have become involved as mentors would have improved skills of working with children. Feedback would have made the entire operation more satisfying for parents and learners.

The social significance of the real life solutions that learners implemented required guidance by the enrichment facilitator. Learners had the ability to sense problems in the world, and they had the desire to improve those conditions they believed were wrong. With the guidance that this model offered, learners produced socially significant projects that benefitted the world.

Report of Action Taken

The "You Can Make a Difference" program was implemented in four

phases. Four grades were involved in the program with multiple groups working within some grades. As a result, not all classes or small groups went through the stages of the program on the same time table. Some groups did not have sufficient time to complete all the phases in 12 weeks.

These phases were the introduction, investigation, planning/action, and reporting. The introduction phase was relatively short and served to inform the faculty and students about the program. Learners were also facilitated to select their problem for investigation. During the investigation phase learners sharpened their thinking about the problem and found information that would be helpful in formulating a solution. The planning and action involved in the solving of problems were taken as a single unit because each action involved another plan for more action. The results of each effort to do something about a problem also altered other plans for additional efforts. The report phase was how the learners disseminated their results to others.

Enrichment classes met in grades five through eight during a 40 minute period on Fridays. Schedule conflicts forced the writer to occasionally use Science periods on Mondays through Thursdays to make up missed sessions. Disruptions caused by vacation days and the school's unexpected involvement in a national basketball tournament forced the writer to make additional adjustments to the schedule.

Introduction Phase

During the first week of implementation the teachers of grades five

through eight were informed about the program at a faculty meeting. The writer also introduced the Thinking Hats model to the teachers. There was very little interest in using this material outside the enrichment period. One teacher did take additional information but never implemented it in her classroom.

The absence of the seventh grade teacher from this workshop was an unexpected obstacle to preparations for the program. This teacher was briefed independently and was also supportive of the program.

At the end of the first week of implementation, students in grades five through eight were introduced to the program and the Thinking Hats problem solving model. In doing some divergent thinking, grades five and seven demonstrated an ability to generate a significant number of new ideas. These same grades funneled their ideas quickly into one, class-wide project. Grade five was interested in recycling and grade seven was interested in helping hungry and homeless people in the community. The eighth grade used the divergent thinking portion of the preparation to complain about the school. There was very little interest by the eighth graders to use convergent thinking to focus their complaints on a single issue. The sixth graders had a broad spectrum of issues that interested them. These various issues converged into three areas for projects.

Investigation Phase

The investigation phase was an opportunity to demonstrate how the Thinking Hats worked for problem solving in a real life setting. Particularly for the sixth grade class, de Bono's (1991) model was a helpful map for attacking

their areas of interest. The fifth grade, however, got through the investigation phase in only two sessions and never had a chance to see the model at work.

The eighth grade spent almost the entire time of implementation investigating their problems. Most sources of information never responded to their inquiries and they were not willing to follow through to complete their investigations.

Only the seventh grade came through this phase at the rate the writer anticipated. This group of learners also had the interest to tie up the loose ends of their investigations and they had the good fortune to get responses to their inquiries in a timely fashion.

Real life problems investigated

The fifth grade did a single project for the entire class. Their common interest was the environment and they investigated how paper could be recycled at the school. The enrichment facilitator called the local government recycling office and was referred to a private company. The local government recycling office immediately provided a packet of information for the class to use in their investigation.

The sixth grade divided into three areas of interest; one area later divided in half making four groups investigating problems in the sixth grade. The areas of interest were fighting crime in our neighborhood, racial tensions in our school, and animal rights which divided into local animal rights and saving endangered species.

The group of sixth graders working on crime wrote the local police chief who responded with substantial packets of information and a personalized letter for each learner. These responses took more time to obtain than the recycling information, though it was very in depth and helpful.

At the suggestion of the enrichment facilitator, the group investigating racial tensions wrote a prominent teacher from a Lutheran school on the west coast of the United States. Before the letter was mailed, however, the regional Lutheran schools superintendent informed the school that this prominent teacher had been arrested and charged with sexually abusing a student. Another individual was contacted after this unfortunate road block, but he was not able to respond until after the twelfth week of practicum implementation.

The group interested in local animal rights wrote the Humane Society and received some information in a timely fashion. The sixth graders investigating the problem of endangered species received a suggestion from a parent regarding a local group that worked to protect manatees. Learners wrote this organization and received information on adopting a manatee as well as some of the dangers that face this animal.

The seventh grade focused their entire efforts on the problems of hunger and homelessness. The enrichment facilitator contacted a local organization for opportunities to become involved in their efforts to fight hunger in the local community. Students proposed a dance to benefit a local organization that fed the homeless. Learners made an appointment with the principal and requested

permission to hold such a dance. At the principal's suggestions, students wrote a letter to the school board asking to hold this event. After laying out some ground rules, the board granted permission for the dance.

The eighth grade was most interested in complaining about conditions at the school. The enrichment facilitator tried to channel these complaints into projects for school improvement. The attitude of these learners was that they could not make a difference, so they did not want to try. Students wrote several letters inquiring about field trips to organizations primarily designed for entertainment. One group of eighth graders expressed interest in the right to life and obtained a great deal of information on the subject. Another group of students became interested in preventing violence. This group wrote one letter to the county sheriff's office but did not receive a response.

Parent mentors solicited during this phase

A letter went out to all parents of fifth through eighth grader during the investigation phase of the "You Can Make a Difference" program. This letter informed parents about the goals of the program, explained how they could become involved in the program, and requested a reply from those interested in being a part of mentoring.

The Planning/Action Phase

The fifth grade moved into action almost immediately. Students placed bins to collect used notebook paper into every classroom in the first week. Posters promoting the recycling project were also displayed in classrooms and

hallways. Learners used their enrichment period each week to collect the paper; a local grocery store donated bags to store the paper, and students wrote a thank you letter to the store's manager. Storage became a problem by the end of the implementation, since there was over 250 pounds of paper collected over 12 weeks of collecting paper.

The sixth grade groups did not enjoy the same tangible results as the fifth grade because of the nature of the problems they chose to address. The group that chose the issue of racial tensions had a difficult problem to consider, while they met with misfortune in trying to find information. This group did have some good discussions on the topic during the enrichment periods and they did get helpful information and a video that the class watched after the implementation period.

The two sixth grade groups that worked with animal rights issues received information from the humane society and an organization that promoted manatee conservation. Both groups became informed about their problem and shared this information with classmates. These learners had more trouble than the other sixth graders with keeping on task and the enrichment facilitator often used prompts to keep them working on their projects.

The group that worked with crime prevention generated the most output of any sixth grade group. The local police chief sent public service videos, crime prevention brochures, community crime statistics, along with the personal letters to each student. This group of learners developed a coloring book to inform

primary grade students about steps to avoid being victimized by crime. These learners also planned to make their own video to be used in the school to help prevent crime; due to technical problems, the video was not produced. The school's video camera was stolen in a break in during implementation. The group working on crime prevention was the most self-directed of all learners and benefitted a great deal from their experience.

One characteristic that was present in all four sixth grade groups was a passion for their area of interest. The groups that worked on the issue of animal rights had very strong feelings about animals before the "You Can Make a Difference" program was implemented. The group that was interested in racial tensions was a ethnically diverse group with one biracial student advocating for the issue. The crime group had three learners who were recently victimized by crime. The enjoyable task of the enrichment facilitator was to direct this interest into learner output.

The seventh grade class did not have the same passion for the issue of homelessness when they began, but they developed a strong interest in the topic during implementation. Several task groups developed within the larger topic of feeding the hungry. One group planned and held a middle school dance that raised $61.75 for a local charity that fed the homeless. As a part of the admission to the dance, canned food was also gathered for the same charity. The seventh grade homeroom teacher participated in this effort as a chaperone along with one parent.

Another task group of seventh graders assisted in the same charitable organization's soup kitchen. These eight learners were transported to the soup kitchen by parents and returned with a contagious enthusiasm for the effort. The enrichment facilitator made the arrangements for this field trip and contacted the head of the organization to speak at an assembly of fifth through eighth graders about the issue of homelessness.

One task group of seventh graders planned, but was not able to complete, an effort to prepare a meal for the local soup kitchen. Donations of food were not adequate to complete this task.

The eighth grade required continuous prompts to stay on task whether they were working on the issues of school improvement, preventing violence, or the right to life. One student wrote an article for the school newsletter about the topic of violence and several letters were written to inquire about possible field trips for the school. The group working on right to life gathered some information, but they were unwilling to disseminate it. Another ongoing problem was that as late as four weeks into the program. students were still wanting to change groups because their interest had changed.

During this phase the discipline demerits were monitored. The results are discussed in Chapter V. Also during this period, the enrichment facilitator contacted parents who had expressed an interest in being mentors. None of these parents were able to help in any areas, and the assistance that parents gave to the program took place outside the planned activities of the practicum.

The Reporting Phase

Beginning with the fourth week of implementation, learners were instructed to complete log forms (see Appendix D). These reports helped the enrichment facilitator monitor progress of each group of learners. Learners were also able to see progress on their tasks by reviewing their logs. The forms were printed so that a student could make multiple entries on the same sheet of paper.

Learners also wrote press releases for local denominational papers. None of these were used by these papers, however.

The most important part of the report phase was the care fair. This fair was a part of the annual potpourri fair which displayed projects by every student in grades three to eight. A spaghetti dinner was held on the same evening and over half of the families in grades five to eight were in attendance.

Each group or class had a story board that displayed information they had gathered. Each project also used the format of a care statement and a made a difference statement. For example, one sixth grade group displayed the care statement, "We care about the problem of racial tension." The corresponding difference statement was, "We made a difference by writing letters and understanding more about this problem."

The outside educators who evaluated the potpourri fair projects also completed the care fair evaluation form (see Appendix C). Since no parents participated in the formal mentoring program, no mentor evaluations were completed.

Following the care fair, learners completed the Learner Self-Check (see Appendix A). The results are discussed in Chapters IV and V.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

Relationship to the Problem

The goal of this practicum was to have learners produce tangible evidence of the values of the school in a way that made life better in the world. The goal was reached. To say that the problem of values held by the school not translating into action was completely solved would overstate the practicum's effectiveness. It would be unrealistic to expect values to be reflected in every action by learners in the school, but it can be said that this practicum made steps in that direction.

Measurement of Outcomes

The outcome of a care fair being held with projects assessed by evaluators was accomplished. Three outside evaluators and one faculty evaluator completed a care fair evaluation form (see Appendix C) for each project displayed. The evaluators for the care fair were the same individuals who evaluated the school's potpourri fair which was held the same night.

Outcomes for all learners

The minimum of five group or individual projects to be displayed at the care fair was exceeded. Six displays showed the work of seven separate projects. A single display explained the efforts of seventh graders to raise money for the hungry as well as one group's active participation in feeding homeless people at

the local soup kitchen. Other displays included the projects on crime prevention, saving the manatees, animal rights, race relations, and recycling. All of these projects, except the one on race relations, were sustained for at least three weeks.

Learners were to regard themselves as positive change agents in the world and empowered to make worthwhile change. All six care fare projects articulated learner caring for the world and their action to demonstrate that caring. A bulletin board promoting the fifth grade recycling project was also displayed for six weeks. Other ways of informing the school community about the caring projects involved the publicity for the dance to help the homeless. Two news releases were written by students, though none were used by denominational papers. One student article on violence was published in the weekly school newsletter.

Learners demonstrated pride in their accomplishments by their answers on self-evaluations (see Appendix A). Since no eighth grade projects were displayed at the care fair, the self-check was administered to fifth through seventh graders. Sixty-five forms were returned and compiled. An average grade of a B on all items that received a grade was the projected outcome. The average grade on the first item, "How did you enjoy doing your care fair project," was a B+. A B+ was also the grade average on the item "How happy are you with the results of your work on the project." The item that asked "How much do you feel that you learned something from this project," received an average grade of a B from the students completing the learner self-check.

During the last four weeks of implementation, the rate of discipline demerits given for inappropriate peer interaction, such as fighting or intimidating, was to be reduced from an average of 1.4 referrals per week to 0.75 referrals per week. During the last four weeks of implementation two demerits were given for inappropriate peer interaction; this is an average of 0.5 referrals per week and it exceeds the anticipated outcome. These results were to be compared to previous years and adjusted for differences in enrollment. Data on demerits was not available for any previous year.

Outcomes for parent involvement

Parent involvement as mentors was to be documented for two of every five projects at the care fair with a total of at least 10 families participating in some level of the process. No parents became formally involved, though five families signed the initial response indicating interest in parent involvement. At least two parents were informally involved in the program. One parent made the suggestion regarding the manatees and sent a brochure in to school and another parent drove learners to the soup kitchen on the day the students fed the homeless.

As a result of no formal involvement, parents were not surveyed regarding their attitudes about the process (see Appendix B). Reasons and implications for this failure to meet outcomes will be discussed below.

Outcomes for socially significant projects

Over the 12 weeks of implementation, at least three enrichment projects

were to benefit the school or larger community so that values of the school would be displayed and promoted in the community. The rate would be 0.25 projects per week. Four projects demonstrated a clear benefit to the school or community at a rate of 0.33 per week.

The projects that actually showed tangible benefit were the dance to benefit the homeless, the feeding project at the soup kitchen, the recycling project, and the crime project. The first three had some impact on the larger community either by helping a group in need or by general conservation of resources. The project on crime benefitted the school by increasing learner awareness of the problem and showing learners ways to be involved in solving it. In terms of the values of the school, the projects involving hunger, homelessness, and recycling translated values into tangible learner output. The issue of crime involved much a broader understanding of human values, but it still indirectly reflected the values of the school.

Discussion

The writer was committed to de Bono's (1982) and Parnes' (1981) approach to lateral and creative thinking. Learners were truly facilitated in this program, perhaps for the first time in their school experience. The results showed the opportunities and problems with these methods.

Learner Output and Values

Learners did produce tangible products in the "You Can Make a Difference" program. These results, either directly or indirectly, reflected the

values of the school. Learners selected the problems, directed the solution strategies, and reported on their efforts to the school community.

Two unexpected problems limited the number of completed projects. First, not all students adjusted to this type of self-directed learning. In all classes some students did not function well with lateral or creative thinking. As a result, they had little or no tangible products from the enrichment experience.

The second problem was that not all learners reflected a high degree of commitment to the school's core values. The eighth grade in particular reacted negatively to suggestions to help others. In the problem identification phase, one discussion about homelessness was a forum for six to eight students to voice their opinion that all poverty was the result of laziness.

Parents as Mentors

Parent involvement in the "You Can Make a Difference" program was minimal and fell well short of projected outcomes. There were several possible explanations. One roadblock to parent involvement was the fact that the practicum was implemented during the writer's first year at the school. There was not time to establish sufficient rapport between parents and a new teacher. Further complicating the problem of newness to the staff was the recent high rate of staff turnover in grades five through eight. Of the four homeroom teachers at these grade levels, two were new to the school and all four were teaching at a different grade level than they had taught the previous year.

Another problem with parent involvement was that parents were never

before solicited at the school for this kind of assistance. A new idea by a new teacher was not well received. Parent mentors, in the writer's view, need to be cultivated over a period of time to be effective. Parents did not readily see their investment of time as being adequately rewarded by involvement as a mentor.

A final difficulty was that parents needed a more personal invitation. The writer should have personally identified and solicited parents appropriate for this task. An individual appeal to parents may have yielded better results.

Other Classroom Teachers

Other classroom teachers did not become as involved with the program as the writer had originally hoped. The issue of time that was discussed in Chapter II was only made worse by the fact that each teacher was teaching at a new grade level. There was also a specific teacher disinterest in activities that involved lateral or creative thinking. The culture of the faculty was much more traditional than originally anticipated.

Recommendations

The practicum can make contributions to the school in which it was originally implemented and in other schools. Recommendations for dissemination to other religious schools are also discussed.

Recommendations for Ongoing Contributions

1. A structured and intentional effort to put values into action must continue at the school in the future. Students should continue to have an opportunity to solve real life problems in a self-directed way.

2. A regular opportunity, perhaps monthly, should be given to middle school students to work at the local soup kitchen.

3. Students should identify and invite assembly speakers to address their peers on socially compelling issues. Students need adult guidance in this task, but learners need to write the necessary letters and arrangements.

4. Parent involvement in this type of program needs to be cultivated over a period of time.

5. Broader involvement by other classroom teachers should be encouraged and facilitated.

Recommendations for Duplication in Other Schools

1. An enrichment facilitator must allow learners to succeed or fail on the basis of their own efforts.

2. The twelve week period of a practicum is not adequate to allow students to accomplish their tasks. A semester commitment to the program would be a minimum time frame.

3. Projects will not likely follow the directions that this group of learners took. There needs to be an openness to student interest in problems not anticipated by the enrichment facilitator.

Recommendations for Dissemination

1. The writer will inform the regional superintendent of Lutheran schools about this practicum and express a willingness to present it at a teachers' conference workshop.

2. The writer will compile the results of the practicum into an article and submit it to Lutheran Education, a publication of the Lutheran Education Association.

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Appendix A

Learner Self-Check

Care Fair Projects

Directions: Give each of the following a letter grade (A, B, C, D, F); plus and minus grades may be used.

1. How did you enjoy doing your care fair project? _____ (grade)

2. How happy are you with the results of your work on the project? _____ (grade)

3. How much do you feel that you learned something from this project? _____ (grade)

If you did a group project answer the next item, otherwwase skip to #5

4. Grade the effort of each member of your group, then rank him or her on how much work the individual did did. To rank each group member, give the person who did the most work a "1", the next a "2" an so forth.

Name	Grade	Rank

Directions: Give a short answer each of these questions.

5. What did you enjoy the most about doing your care fair project?

6. What did you like the least?

7. How did your project help to make the world a better place?

8. What about your project makes you the most proud?

9. What would you do differently on your project?

Appendix B

Enrichment Program
Mentor Response

1. With what grade level child did you work as a mentor (*circle all that apply*)?

5 6 7 8

Directions: Give short answers to the following. Use the back if needed.

2. What was the most rewarding part of your involvement with the parent-mentor program?

3. What was special about the job of a mentor?

4. Would you be a mentor again? Why or why not?

5. How do you feel that this enrichment project made the world a better place?

Appendix C

Care-Fair Evaluation Form

Evaluator:

Project Name:

Students or Class:

1) Who was this project designed to help?

2) How did this project demonstrate caring for others in a Chrwastian way?

3) Was there anything that would have made this a better project?

4) What was the strongest part of this project?

Appendix D

Enrichment Log Form

Name:_____ Grade:_____ Today's Date:_____

What did you work on today?

How has today's work made a difference in your project?

What is in the way of making a difference?

What needs to be done by next week?